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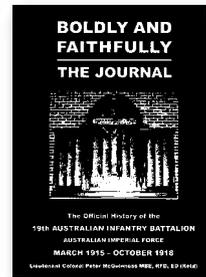
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## **BOOK REVIEW**

# ***Boldly and faithfully – the journal: the official history of the 19th Australian Infantry Battalion – Australian Imperial Force***

by Lieutenant Colonel Peter McGuinness, MBE, RFD, ED (Ret'd)

1/19 RNSWR Association: Sydney<sup>1</sup>; 2011; 748 pp.; ISBN 9780909133078;  
RRP \$100.00 (hardback); Ursula Davidson Library call number: Q503.2 MCGU 2011



The 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion was one of 20 infantry battalions from New South Wales to serve in the Great War. One of the four battalions of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Division, it served on Gallipoli in 1915 and in France and Flanders in 1916–1918. It won 20 battle honours and one Victoria Cross.

The author, Peter McGuinness, is a retired citizen soldier who commanded the 1<sup>st</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment, from 1980 to 1983. In civil life, he was a News Limited executive for 31 years. This is his second involvement in preparing a unit history. In 2006, he edited the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of *The Grim Glory* (1/19 RNSWR Association), the official history of the 2/19<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion, which had fought in Malaya in 1941-42.

*Boldly and Faithfully* fills a gap in the recorded history of the Great War. The 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion was one of few battalions not to have written its history. While the general nature of its activities was well known, the detail had remained buried in the national archives.

The battalion had been raised in Australia in March 1915 and, after training in Egypt, had landed on Gallipoli in August 1915. Following a brief period in the line at Hill 60, it became responsible for the defence of Pope's Post until its withdrawal from Gallipoli in December.

After further training in Egypt and defensive duties on the Suez Canal, the battalion embarked for France in March 1916. Its first major action was at Pozières in the Somme Valley in July-August where it suffered heavy casualties. Major actions followed near Flers on 14 November and in the Second Battle of Bullecourt on 4-5 May 1917. Later, during the Third Battle of Ypres in Belgian Flanders in September-October 1917, the battalion's commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel C. R. A. Pye, DSO, was killed-in-action at Broodseinde Ridge.

During the 1918 German spring offensive, the battalion initially occupied a blocking position east of Messines in Flanders before being transferred back to the Somme, where it entered the line near Villers-Bretonneux on 5 April. Lieutenant P. V. Storkey was awarded the Victoria Cross for his gallantry during a counter attack at Hangard Wood the following day.

In the lead up to and during the great allied offensives of the 1918 summer, the battalion, understrength but highly experienced and battle-hardened, participated in

several major battles in the Somme: Le Hamel on 4 July; Amiens on 8 August; Mont St Quentin from 31 August to 3 September, perhaps its greatest achievement; and Beaufort (within the Hindenburg Line) on 3 October, its last action of the war.

*Boldly and Faithfully* is unusual in that, rather than being written in narrative form, it is presented as a diary that records events as they occurred chronologically each day from Tuesday 9 March 1915 to Thursday 10 October 1918. The journal is essentially the battalion's own war record as it was recorded in the field, in brief note form, by the participants in their own words. McGuinness has transcribed the battalion's war diary and the private diaries of several of the battalion's members. In doing his transcriptions, he has resisted as far as possible making any changes to the original writers' words, except for adding clarity to a few, otherwise confusing, entries. He has supplemented the diary account with relevant battalion operation orders, intelligence reports, intelligence summaries, reports of boards of inquiry and the like. He has added extensive footnotes, including a biographical note on each of the persons mentioned in the war diary as they are mentioned, plus other detail necessary for a proper understanding of the matters being addressed.

There are 44 chapters, one for each month from March 1915 to October 1918. Each commences with a short biography of a member of the battalion. This is followed by a general paragraph or two that summarise the activities of the month. The transcription from the war diary and private diaries (where appropriate) then follow, with relevant operational and intelligence reports and the like appended. The chapters are liberally illustrated with photos and maps mostly from the Australian War Memorial archives – some of the maps are in colour and have been especially prepared for this volume. There are a battalion honour roll, a nominal roll and an index at the end.

Peter McGuinness is to be congratulated for his meticulous and painstaking research and for bringing this work to fruition in a handsomely-presented volume. It must have been a truly enormous undertaking. Historians, however, will be disappointed that he has not included a conventional list of sources or a bibliography. The book will appeal primarily to descendants of the participants and to members of the wider battalion and regimental family.

**David Leece**

<sup>1</sup>This book may be purchased from Mr R. J. Pink, Secretary, 1/19 RNSWR Association, PO Box 224, Ingleburn NSW 1890; Telephone: (02) 8747 0941; Mobile: 0414 907 427; Email: bob.pink@optusnet.com.au.